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ABSTRACT

The educational expectations of military parents with less than nine years military service time were compared to the actual experiences of military parents who have 17 years or more service time. Emphasis on the characteristic of occupational mobility and how it impacts on the parents' educational expectations. Two groups (N=68 for each group) were selected so that the stratified random sample technique could be utilized. Group I came from the United States Army Air Defense Advance Course, a majority of the officers being in their fifth year of military service. Group II came from the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, a majority of the NCO's being in their 17th year of military service. The basic difference between the groups was inexperience versus experience in educational matters. The following areas were surveyed: school transfers, educational attainment, school discipline, educational facilities, lost school time, completion time, financial costs, and academic skill areas. Indications were that relatively new military parents do not understand or appreciate the effects that military life may have on their children's education. (Author)

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A STUDY OF MILITARY DEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

by

Gary C. Ritter

November 1, 1979

CG 014064

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Table — Page

I. Officer Children's Skill Problems Based on Expectations 34

II. NCO Children's Skill Problems Based on Experience 35

Figure

1. Attained Parental Educational Experience 27

2. Years of Service Per Respondent Grouping 29

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Letter of Transmittal	ii
List of Illustrations	iii
SECTION	
I. Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Importance of the Study	2
Limitations of the Study	3
Definition of Terms	5
Educational Expectations	5
Dependent Children	5
Occupational Mobility	6
Peripatetic	6
United States Dependents School, European Area	6
Theoretical Framework	6
II. PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY	8
Population	8
Selection of the Sample	10
Collection and Organization of the Data	11
Treatment of the Data	13
Summary of Section II	13
III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	15
The Military Family	15

Page

Psychological Characteristics 16

Educational Characteristics 18

Peripatetic Effects 20

School Problems 21

Summary of Section III 23

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA 26

Demographic Data 26

Sex 26

Ethnic Origin 26

Education Level 26

Length of Service 28

Surveyed Data of the Hypotheses 28

Discussion 28

School Moves 30

Attained Education Level 30

Discipline 31

Educational Facility 31

Lost School Time 31

On Time School Completion 32

Economic Burden 32

Skill Problems 33

Summary of Section IV 36

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 39

Conclusions 39

Page

Recommendations 40

FOOTNOTES 43

BIBLIOGRAPHY 45

APPENDICES 48

Appendix A: Survey Instrument 49

Appendix B: Disposition Form USASMA 51

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

In the United States military world there is no sense of permanence in personnel life styles. A soldier is ofter called upon to move in a short period of time. This occupational mobility places many stresses upon the military family, ranging from marital problems to financial problems for military dependents. Every military parent has some expectations or hopes for his children.

Parental educational expectations are often overly optimistic. The most likely reason is a lack of experience. However, because expectations are too high, military children are put on pedestals that have a shakey foundation. The child may fail to reach these educational goals due to a variety of reasons. In attempting to reach unreachable goals, the military parent makes decisions that negatively affect both his child's education and his own military career. An example would be the soldier who wants to have his child get an education in one geographic location. The soldier consequently goes overseas alone for as long as three years in an unaccompanied status. This procedure, though not particularly pleasant, is what many military parents decide to do. They make this decision based on little or no information regarding educational opportunities or prospects. Therefore, it is imperative that military parents obtain as realistic a picture of the military educational environment as possible.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine those educational expectations of military parents with less than nine years military service time and compare those expectations to the actual experiences of military parents who have seventeen years or more of service time. Emphasis is placed on the characteristics of occupational mobility and the resulting impact on educational expectations.

Importance of the Study

There is not an abundance of data in the area of educational expectations. Not only military parents, but all parents whose occupation has a high level of mobility, need to be aware of some of the factors that can affect their children's educational experiences. School administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers must be aware of these factors and how they impact upon the military dependent student. School personnel, to be competent in dealing with military parents, must be conscious of the stresses and expectations that are peculiar to this type occupation. By doing so, they may be able to handle successfully any problem that may arise in dealing with military parents. Where there is a large military community, effects of mobility are an important area in school-community relations.

Limitations of the Study

The first major limitation that impacts upon this study concerns the equality in parental education levels between the two selected groups. In Group I, the military parents with nine years or less of service time, it is estimated that 90 percent have completed their undergraduate degrees. In Group II, of the military parents with seventeen years or more of military service, only 25 percent approximately have completed some type of college level degree. This limitation arises from the need for a stratified random sample. The division between the groups is length of service time. It was not practical nor possible within the time constraint to survey, collectively or individually, a sufficient number of high ranking, long serving, educationally equivalent officers on Fort Bliss. However, Group II does compare favorably with idealized officers in the area of service time, educational experiences with respect to their children, and to some degree, their own level of educational development.

The second major limitation is achieving racial equality in the survey. Group I has less than 10 percent of minority groups in its makeup. This is consistent with the United States Army Officer Corps ratio overall. On the other hand, Group II has between 30 and 40 percent minority groups in it makeup. Therefore, the racial background of the groups may not be equally representative with the population. This is an uncontrolled variable.

The third major limitation is the study's voluntary nature. Because of the lack of official sanction by Department of the Army representatives, only voluntary participation of personnel in the two groups could be obtained. Possibly a more representative and accurate study could be obtained if the survey was required to be completed by the selected group.

The fourth major limitation concerns the sample size. Again, lacking official Department of the Army sanction, conducting a Fort Bliss-wide sample was prohibited. Thus, the results cannot be interpreted to be reflective of the United States Army in general, but only of two particular groups from Fort Bliss, Texas. However, the results can be utilized within certain parameters later discussed.

The fifth major limitation is the period of time in which this survey was conducted. In the military there are two distinct phases: wartime and peacetime. Depending on the situation, responses can be expected to vary accordingly. An example is the number of times a military family would be required to move. In a long war, approximately five to eight years, a family may not have to move at all because there would be no need for the family to accompany the soldier overseas. In peacetime, it is probable that the family will generally accompany the soldier to an overseas assignment. Again, this is an uncontrolled variable.

The sixth major limitation is that not all respondents were actually parents at this point in time. Only parents or parents-to-be completed the survey.

It was important to include the parents-to-be group because they have educational expectations for their future children too. This is an uncontrolled variable in this situation because a percentage of the parents-to-be group may not in fact have children for a variety of reasons. This group was needed, however, to obtain a sufficient size sample of expectations for comparative purposes.

The seventh major limitation reflects the degree of uncertainty in a military career. A certain percentage of the Group I parents or parents-to-be will not remain on active military duty through the completion of twenty years. Even with a breaking point of nine years service time, there are still two subgroups with Group I: those who will complete at least twenty years barring difficulties and those who will not complete twenty years. As before, this is an uncontrolled variable due to the uncertainity of this aspect.

Definition of Terms

Educational Expectations

Education expectations are the contemplated, prospective, or calculated hopes and/or desires of military parents with reference to their children's educational development and scholastic achievement.

Dependent Children

Dependent children are those children of military parents generally, either active or retired military status. The military term for family members to include the wife and all sons and daughters.

Occupational mobility

Occupational mobility is "Professional or semi-professional groups moving in pursuance of a career (not a job) in the highly structured hierarchies of modern administration, business, and education."[1] Accordingly, the U.S. military organization falls under the meaning of this term.

Peripatetic

Peripatetic is defined as "One who walks from place to place; an itinerant."[2] One can equally argue that the military has an itinerant aspect similar to that of the migrant worker especially in regards to his children's education and associated disruptions.

United States Dependents Schools, European Area

The United States Dependents Schools, European Area (USDESEA) is the nation's nineteenth largest educational system. USDESEA operates out of its headquarters in Karlsruhe, West Germany. The system provides educational opportunities for U.S. military dependents in fourteen different countries of Western Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. This is only one of the major educational systems under control of the Department of Defense Overseas Education program.

Theoretical Framework

The following hypotheses will be examined to determine those educational expectations and experiences pertinent to this study's problem.

H_1: Military parents with nine years or less service time underestimate the number of school transfers their children will make due to mobility when compared to a group of military parents with 17 years or more service time.

H_2: Military parents with nine years or less service time do not accurately predict what academic level of education their children will attain while the father is on active duty when compared to a group of military parents with 17 years or more service time.

H_3: Military parents with nine years or less service time underestimate problems concerning school discipline, either corporal or academic, for their children when compared to a group of military parents with 17 years or more service time.

H_4: Military parents with nine years or less service time do not accurately predict what type of educational facility their children will attend when compared to a group of military parents with 17 years or more service time.

H_5: Military parents with nine years or less service time underestimate the number of months of school time lost due to mobility and illness for their children when compared to a group of military parents with 17 years or more service time.

H_6: Military parents with nine years or less service time underestimate the number of years it will take their children to finish a 13-year education cycle (K-12) when compared to a group of military parents with 17 years or more service time.

H_7: Military parents with nine years or less service time underestimate the economic burden that their children's education will cost due to mobility when compared to a group of military parents with 17 years or more service time.

H_8: Military parents with nine years or less service time underestimate academic deficiencies in fundamental elementary level skill areas in their children when compared to a group of military parents with 17 years or more service time.

SECTION II

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY

Population

This study proposes to examine those educational expectations that would be realized after twenty years in the military. Two groups were selected to represent the whole population of the United States Army within certain parameters. Group I represents military parents with seventeen years or more service time. The population was stratified so the stratified random sample technique could be employed in gathering data.

The results of this survey can be generalized for the U.S. Army only if those personnel fall within the parameters of Group I, which came from the United States Army Air Defense Officers Advance Course, Class 2-77 located at Fort Bliss, Texas. They were selected because the majority of the class was entering its fifth year of military service. Parents in this group were planning to have children soon or just recently had children; they had little if any educational experiences with their own children. Thus, any opinion they might have at best would be expectation only. A majority of this group will continue in the military for at least twenty years if given the opportunity. Therefore, this group would most likely experience the educational environment that is typical of a military career. The main parameters pertinent are: to be parents or parents-to-be, planning to make the military a career for at least twenty years, and serving less than nine years active military service.

The results of this survey can also be generalized for U.S. Army personnel that fall within the parameters of Group II, which came from the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Class 1-78 also located at Fort Bliss, Texas. This group was selected because the majority had completed 17 years of military service and were most likely to complete at least twenty years. The men that are selected and attend the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy are the cream of the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) within all military services. They are very motivated and dedicated to promoting professionalism in the U.S. Army. Only those parents who had children or were going to have children were surveyed. Divorced men who remarried and had subsequent families were not surveyed as this would introduce another uncontrolled variable. If these parents had children early in their career, they have experienced the entire realm of educational systems and problems with their children. Thus, these Non-Commissioned Officers provide the experience necessary for the study. The main parameters pertinent in this group are: are parents or parents-to-be, have completed 85 percent of a military career with the intent to fully complete it, and had experienced the various educational environments offered in the course of a military career.

Both groups are homogeneous within themselves. The differentiating areas are primarily rank and length of service. Rank is of little importance in this study. Educational background of the two groups and how this variable can be minimized is important. Just how large or significant is the difference in educational background and associated rank between these two groups?

Education of the respondents was previously discussed in the Limitations.

It is re-stressed at this time to dispel the idea that the educational expectations of the groups might be different based upon what the respective groups themselves had achieved. The striving for higher educational achievement by military personnel at all levels of rank is constantly receiving emphasis, which results from the shrinking of the Army and the corresponding competitiveness for available jobs. As the Army becomes smaller, so do the number of high level, prestigious jobs. To be promoted and remain competitive with peers, higher education is the increasingly necessary for all ranks.

Selection of the Sample

For this study, the stratified random sampling technique was used. Homogeneity of the two groups was the determining factor for this choice. Additionally, a relatively large sampling was not possible. There was a total of approximately 270 possible respondents in both groups who were parents or planned to be parents. Therefore, the main advantage of using the stratified random sampling technique is the need for fewer cases in a stratified, homogeneous grouping while retaining an equivalent degree of accuracy obtained by other sampling methods.

The size of the sample was determined by using the following formula:

> $N=(z/e)^2(p)(1-p)$ where N is the sample size; z the standard score corresponding to a given confidence level; e is the amount of tolerable sampling error in a given situation; and p is the proportion of the cases in the population.[3]

For this study a 90 percent confidence level was chosen. The standard score equivalent to 90 percent is 1.65. A 10 percent sampling error was selected. The proportion of the cases was chosen to be equal or .5. The sample size for both homogeneous groups was determined in the following calculations.

$$N=(1.65/10)^2(.5)(1-.5)$$
$$N=(272.25)(.25)$$
$$N=68$$

Thus, at a minimum, 136 returns equally divided between both groups were required to obtain a 90 percent level of confidence in the results.

Collection and Organization of the Data

Questionnaires were prepared to determine educational expectations and experiences from the selected samples. A copy of the survey instrument is found in Appendix A. Demographic information of the respondents was surveyed in Questions 1 through 5. Various expectations and experiences common in the military dependent education environment were the subjects of Questions 6 through 15. Questions 9 and 15 have been eliminated from the development of this study because they were not clear to survey respondents.

The survey distribution was handled differently in each group due to various U.S. Army requirements. The instruments were disseminated to three subsections of the U.S. Army Air Defense Officers Advance Class. Each student in the class initially received a copy of the questionnaire whether or not they were parents. Then, they were told that this survey was completely voluntary.

Next, the subsections were told that they should fill out the survey only if they were currently parents or were going to be parents at some point in their military careers. All nonparents returned their questionnaires. It was stressed to the remaining respondents that the survey wanted their educational expectations. It was recognized that in some areas answers would be guesses or at best, estimates in certain situations. They were told that their wives could complete the survey if they so desired. Out of 99 cases, 70 instruments were returned from Group I.

The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Class was handled differently. Group II personnel must fill out numerous surveys while in residence at the Academy. Therefore, permission was obtained to survey only married men with dependents either accompanied or unaccompanied at Fort Bliss. These men were identified by Army records, and the surveys were individually addressed. A cover letter from the Director of Evaluation was placed on the survey. The Disposition Form (See appendix B) stressed that the survey was completely voluntary. The survey could be completed by the wives, if the men so desired. Also, many families of senior NCO's and officers have more than one child. Respondents were told to answer the survey based on their oldest child. The survey instrument did not provide for multiple responses due to having more than one child. Out of 177 cases, 70 were returned for compilation and analysis.

The surveys were all collected and numbered. The randomness of the survey comes from the nature in which the questionnaires were distributed and the voluntary, random way in which they were returned. There were not enough surveys returned to draw a subsequent random sample from the collected surveys and obtain reliable results.

After compiling, the survey responses to each question were transformed into numerical equivalents that facilitated tallying. The numerical equivalents were then keypunched on IBM cards for computer processing.

Treatment of the Data

The Stanford Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programmed into the computer at The University of Texas at El Paso was adapted and used in the processing of the raw data. The questionnaire was designed so that the numerical raw data could be processed by the CROSSTABS program within the SPSS options. All statistical options in the CROSSTABS program were requested. Pearson's r and Eta Coefficient with their associated significances were utilized in the analysis of the data. The summations and corresponding percentages with no extra statistical analysis were utilized additionally.

Summary of Section II

The makeup of the selected groups, the determination of the sample size, the type of sampling method selected, the survey distribution and collection, and finally the statistical treatment of the data in this study have been discussed in this section. The returns from these two groups were completely random in nature. Within the described parameters, the results of this study may be generalized for all similar U.S. Army personnel.

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SECTION III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Educational experiences vary from family to family. What are the existing facts regarding common characteristics of military children? Furthermore, what educational problems can military parents expect to encounter with their children during a military career? This section examines the existing information as documented in research and writing.

The Military Family

Before discussing the military dependent student, it is helpful to know some general characteristics of the military family. The military environment exerts many stresses upon children. Civilian and military communities for the most part remain segregated. Civilians tend to view service families as strangers or migrants, and at times economically exploit military families. As a result, family members generally tend to turn towards each other and have close family relationships. During transfers when ties are broken with friends and relatives, the family turns inward. There is a great tendency to rely on one another. This tendency is extended to the homogeneous military community in which the family lives. Another predominant characteristic is paternal absences or enforced separation due to military unaccompanied tours which is a permanent possibility in a military career. Extreme stress is placed

upon all family members in their individual attempt to adapt and cope with the problem of not having a father on a daily basis. These are some of the major characteristics of the military family that have an impact and an influence upon the military dependent child.

Psychological Characteristics

What are some of the psychological characteristics that appear to be common among children of professional military personnel? Generally, the military dependent child encounters more psychological stresses than his civilian counterpart. This arises from the special hardships that the child is introduced to and must endure. Some examples would be paternal separation, long duty hours, frequent transfers to different duty stations throughout the world, and the daily participation in a closed homogeneous social system by necessity. Another important psychological characteristic is the ability of the military child to form bonds between nonrelated families quickly and strongly, partly due to the lack of relatives and friends of long standing. While the child has this adaptive ability, it also is exercised frequently and prohibits deep friendships from forming. This is a direct result of the migratory nature of the military. Along the same lines, the social life during school years is constantly being tumbled for the dependent adolescent due to frequent transfers. It is especially hard to strike up friendships, have girlfriends or boyfriends, or generally integrate smoothly into a new social system.

The problem of delinquency has documented psychological roots. One civilian study, "Where's Dad?" by Anderson (1968) dealt with the

relationship between paternal deprivation and delinquency. He reported a positive relationship between the actual absences of the natural father and the development of delinquent behavior. Furthermore, Anderson found age-relatedness between a father's absence and the vulnerability of delinquent development. A boy's greatest susceptibility was found to be in the age range of four to seven years. This aspect has serious implications for military parents as well as elementary school administrators and teachers.

A natural step from delinquency is to the topic of discipline. The area of discipline has a great influence upon the military dependent child's psychological make-up. Family relations are strongly affected when military commanders intervene either directly or indirectly in family discipline. An example of direct involvement with a military child's discipline follows:

> . . . a youngster's behavior becomes disturbing to the post command. In a sense, a child is able to place his parents, in particular his father, on the carpet with superiors. The parental response is expectation of more acceptable behavior in his offspring.[4]

The fact remains, a child's behavior can be unfavorably reflected in the father's military records, which often causes the father to exercise strict and careful controls over his children.

Most military parents do not expect to have discipline problems of any type with their children. However, in the area of school discipline, the military parent should be aware of the reality of school discipline, especially in the public schools, in its various forms. An Ohio survey conducted during the 1972-1973 school year indicated that one child in ten was suspended during the school year. This statistic

is reflected nationwide. Therefore, even with the emphasis placed on strict discipline within the military family, a military child is apt to encounter some form of scholastic discipline. One of the most frequently used tools today is student suspension. Combining this fact with the parental expectation of no discipline problems produces another psychological stress on the child.

These are some of the major psychological characteristics that have an impact upon the educational development of the military dependent child. Military parents must consider the varying degrees of influence these characteristics might have upon their children.

Educational Characteristics

In the area of intelligence, the military child is superior to the average civilian child. A comparison between military and civilian children was conducted using the California Test of Mental Maturity (CTMM) to measure intelligence. The results of the 1963 study indicated that the children of a representative U.S. dependent junior high school in Europe had a median intelligence quotient (IQ) score of 112. The civilian CTMM median IQ score of 100 was taken to represent the general U.S. student. "The higher median IQ among military children is probably explained by the fact that the military is a select community. Mental retardates among fathers are ruled out in pre-enlistment screening."[5]

In the area of scholastic achievement, basic intelligence is only a part of intellectual functioning. What a child does with his intelligence is at least as important as his innate capacity. In the period 1962-1963, two studies were conducted — one by Likens (1962) and the

other by Scott (1963) - in this area. They respectively used the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) and the Iowa Achievement Test (IAT) to measure the school performance of military children. The test normals were taken as representative of the general U.S. population. The SAT indicated the average military child is achieving at a level approximately eight months above that of the general U.S. average. The IAT indicated that the average overall student achievement in the Department of Defense schools was above the 75th percentile. The average U.S. civilian child achieved at the 50th percentile. Thus, the military dependent child shows scholastic achievement superior to that of the average student in the U.S.

The importance of getting a good education and continuing an educational program is continually being stressed to the military dependent child. A highly educated and trained person is needed in the Army today. The military child sees this emphasis reflected in his father's career. A bachelor's degree is no longer sufficient to remain competitive in the Army. He needs at least a master's degree especially if he is an officer. This aspect is brought home daily to the military child, and may be a contributing factor in attempting to account for the superiority of the military dependent child.

The educational system a military child attends during an overseas tour is another plausible reason for his academic achievement. The overseas schools particularly the United States Dependents Schools, European Area (USDESEA) are of unusually high caliber. USDESEA is rated as one of the most innovative and imaginative systems in American education. It has launched an impressive number of instructional programs designed to serve its unique student population.

The population has almost a 70 percent complete turnover every school year.

In view of this factor, USDESEA had to do the following:

> . . . the system has hired outstanding teachers to the system. (It) has a standing file of 11,000 applicants for about 300 vacancies (yearly). (In teacher selection, USDESEA can afford to be very selective.)[6]

The aforementioned areas are considered some of the more positive educational characteristics that impact upon the military dependent child.

Peripatietic Effects

School Problems

Past studies have repeatedly shown that occupational mobility has a distinctly negative and harmful effect upon a student's educational development and achievement if he has the slightest weakness. Firth has stated the main problem clearly:

> Put simply, for each change of school, the break in continuity is exacerbated by an absence of consistency . . . . As occupationally mobile families periodically shift their homes, so children perforce change their schools. In the process, exposure to diversity within the schools' systems can be handicapping to pupils and perplexing to parents . . . .[7]

Several concrete examples clearly explain the severity of this situation.

> . . . . The military youngster . . . . (as) a fourth grader may have attended two or three schools. A high school graduate may have been through four or more schools, sometimes having been in one at interrupted intervals. (Due to their specialities, many soldiers are assigned after a tour away back to the base where their services are demanded.)[8]

One final example reinforces the point about educational mobility.

The unpredictable diversity of school systems has a negative effect upon the student trying to tie together educational concepts and thereby establishing a sense of continuity in his learning. The transformation of the learning environment — of buildings, of teachers, and curriculum and methods, of books and equipment, and of regional or national differences — force the military student to assimilate all the various facets and divergent thoughts into a coherent and understandable education. The average number of school changes is one every two-and-a-half years during a child's military career. Many times it is more frequent. Trying to cope successfully with seven or eight educational systems can indeed be a distressful and trying experience.

In light of these problems, it is vital that some sense of continuity be provided or preserved for the military dependent child. He must have a coherent and continuing sense of direction or he will most likely fail as a result of confusion, frustration, and finally apathy. Parental direction is vital to the child's educational success in moving from school to school.

Learning Problems

Mobility not only contributes to educational problems, but it has a negative effect on learning skills. Learning elementary skills and the associated problems due to mobility are not minor in nature. A study conducted by Kenny (1963) examined the degree of maladjustment in military children. Approximately 31 percent of the children in a psychological clinic were diagnosed as being significantly maladjusted.

> Significant maladjustment is defined as a problem felt to be a serious interference with an important life area. In most of these cases, the parents, principals, or police had been obliged to take some action because of the child's behavior.[10]

An example of this behavior is a child of normal intelligence performing two or more years below grade level in some skill area(s).

The problem of learning disabilities related to occupational mobility is not limited to the U.S. Army. Studies conducted in Great Britain with the Royal Air Force have found other disturbing patterns further supporting this hypothesis. Early research on case studies of backwardness identified frequent school changes as a major cause. Patterson's study (1950) confirmed the finding that pupils who have made a large number of school changes, especially during infant and primary levels, subsequently became retarded. The National Child Development Study, First Report (1967) clearly found several important relationships that appear to be negatively influenced by mobility. First, moving homes and changing schools affected educational achievement and progress. Second, the lack of continuity in teaching methods and reading schemes, and a disrupted family life characteristic of military families all contributed to a pattern of backwardness and maladjustment in mobile children.

The Manchester Survey (1967) also confirmed the fact that arithmetic skills suffered with frequent teacher changes. The Local Education Authority Literary Survey (1969) dealing with children's stability in school concluded the following:

> The problem was quite clear: the proportion of poor readers increased the more schools the children had attended, and the proportion of good readers decreased . . . . It would seem, therefore, that change, whether of schools or of school teachers, affects more the weaker children.[11]

Overall it seems clear that occupational mobility, especially within the U.S. Army, is a serious and detrimental factor with regards to elementary level skill development particularly among students of below average ability. This is a distinct handicap that military children must learn to cope with and overcome, or be overwhelmed and defeated. As was discussed, arithmetic and reading skills are easily effected. A significant risk of educational retardation and emotional maladjustment can be expected among children who have learning disabilities if additional assistance is not sought in the course of moving from school to school.

Summary of Section III

Countless military families have experienced the foregoing presented stresses and problems. They have emerged with little, if any, adverse effects upon their personality or educational development. They are the fortunate ones. Many military dependent children gain new strengths as a result of attending a wide variety of school systems. The intent of this review has been to show likely areas that possibly might affect a military dependent child's educational development and attainment. By recognizing the pressures and stresses put on military children, parents, as well as professional school personnel, will be able to understand not only the particular problems associated with mobility, but to promote the well-being and proper development of the student's personality and education. The psychological and educational problems of peripatetic personnel have yet to reach the public's awareness. Adequate research and documentation has yet to determine fully and

precisely the full effects of frequent and recurrent family migration on the military dependent child. The problem areas addressed, however, must be fully recognized by military parents so that they can take appropriate action to forestall any developmental or educational problems.

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SECTION IV

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

Demographic Data

Sex

The sex of the respondents was primarily male. In Group I, 96 percent were male while in Group II, 99 percent were male. This statistic stems from the fact that the questionnaires were distributed in military classrooms. Wives had little opportunity to participate in the survey.

Ethnic Origin

Ethnic backgrounds in both groups were predominantly white. The breakdown of Groups I and II respectively was: Anglo--86 percent and 73 percent; Indian--both 1 percent; Black--6 percent and 16 percent; Asian--0 percent and 3 percent; and Hispanic--both 7 percent.

Education Level

Educational background of the respondents is graphically displayed in Figure 1. Generally, 87 percent of Group I had obtained undergraduate or advanced degrees. For Group II, 75 percent had two years or less of college background. Essentially though, both groups were within two years of each other in personal educational development. Both length of service and rank when compared against personal educational attainment showed high

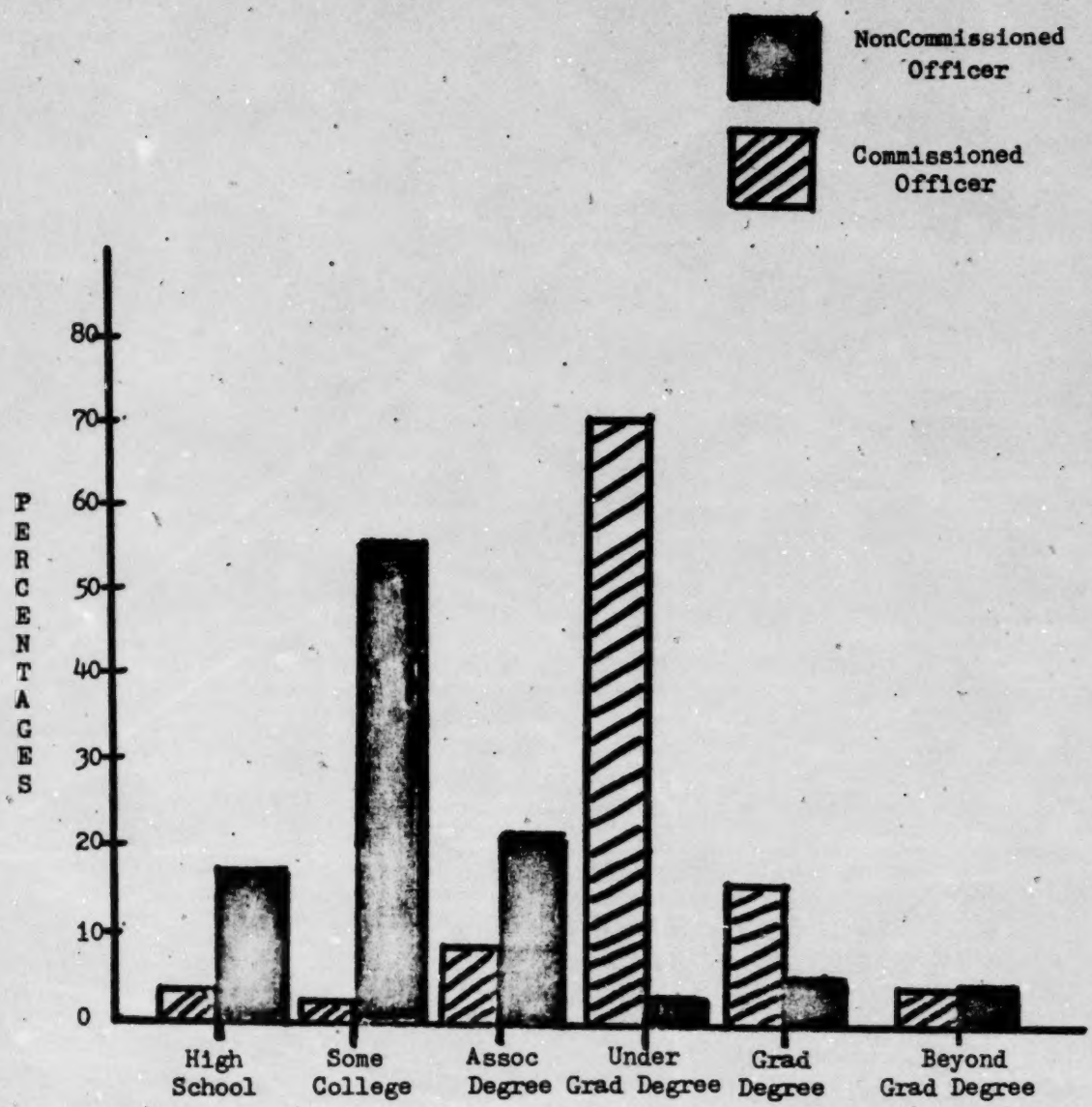

Figure 1

Attained Parental Educational Experience

eta correlation, .88 and .84 respectively. This further points out that educational attainment did not tend to be a linear relationship. Educational level tended to vary within the groups.

Length of Service

The final area of demographic data is the distinguishing difference between the groups--the length of service time. Group I had the following distribution: 51 percent had 2 to 5 years service; 37 percent had 6 to 9 years service; and 12 percent had over 9 years service. Group II had no individuals with less than 14 years service; 21 percent served between 14 and 17 years; 69 percent served between 18 to 21 years; and 10 percent had served between 22 and 25 years. These data are graphically presented in Figure 2.

Surveyed Data of the Hypotheses

Discussion

The following results were obtained based on the two stratified random sample groups. A total of 140 survey instruments were returned from both groups. The return was completely random in nature. A two variable analysis was conducted between rank and each hypothesis as represented in the appropriate survey question. Group I respondents are officers in addition to being parents with 9 years or less service time. Group II are NonCommissioned Officer personnel in addition to being parents with 17 years or more service time. Rank was utilized for comparative purposes rather than length of service due to a consolidation

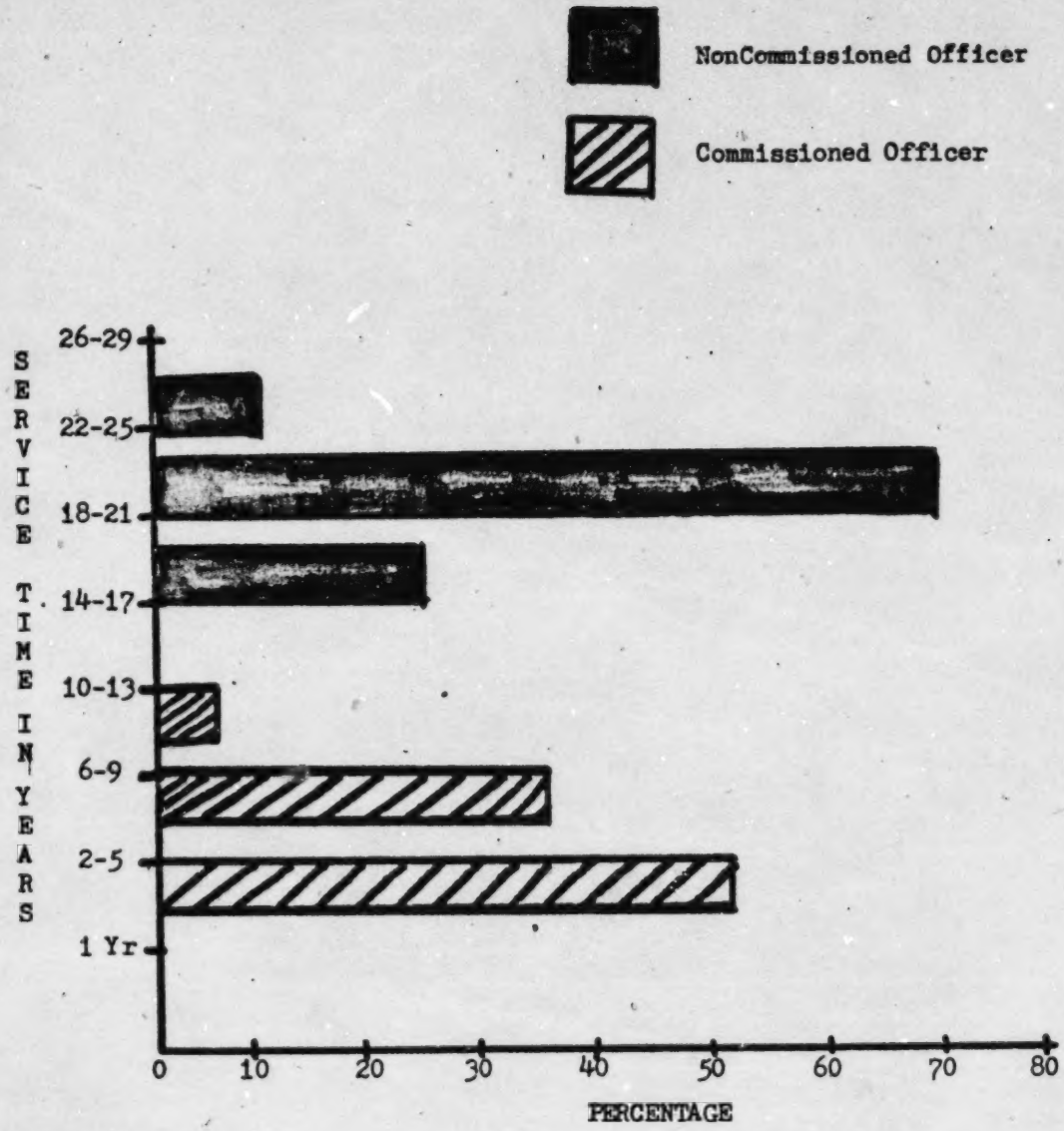

Figure 2

Years of Service Per Respondent Grouping

of data (only two major groups instead of seven groups). When compared with the same variable, rank data and length of service data show very little difference for each hypothesis. This is to be expected because they both essentially came from the same sample group.

School Moves

The first area investigated concerned the number of school transfers military dependent students would have to make due to the frequency of their parents' moving. Group I indicated the following expectations: 87 percent indicated that their children would be transferred between 3 and 8 times for a mean of 6 moves. Group II had the following experience in this area: 81 percent indicated that their children moved between 5 and 10 times for a mean of 8 moves.

Attained Education Level

The second area investigated concerned the level of education a military dependent child would successfully finish while his father was on active military duty. Group I had the following expectations: 20 percent would complete the middle grade level; 34 percent would complete the secondary grade level; 33 percent would complete the undergraduate level; and 6 percent would complete graduate level or beyond. Group II, on the other had, experienced the following: 4 percent completed the middle grade level; 37 percent completed the secondary level, 46 percent completed the undergraduate level; and 7 percent completed the graduate level or above.

Discipline Problems

The third area investigated concerned the general area of school discipline. Group I overall was very certain that their children would not have any problems as 87 percent expected no problems of any nature. Seven percent expected that their children would be suspended one or more times. Three percent indicated that the child would fail one or more times. Group II also generally experienced no problems by indicating a high 83 percent had been free of discipline problems. Only 3 percent indicated that their child had been suspended which is far below the national average. Fourteen percent stated that their children had failed one or more grades.

Educational Facility

The fourth area investigated concerned the area of attended educational institutions for the majority of a child's education. Group I indicated that 74 percent expected their children to attend both Department of Defense (DOD) and civilian schools. Ten percent expected their children to attend parochial schools. Solely civilian schools were expected by 9 percent of the group. Group II indicated that 86 percent of their children did in fact attend a combination of DOD and civilian schools. Twelve percent indicated that their children had attended only civilian schools.

Lost School Time

The fifth area investigated concerned the number of months a military dependent student would lose due to transfers of illness. Group I showed the following expectations: 7 percent stated no months would be lost; 41 percent

indicated that 1 to 3 months would be lost; 31 percent stated 4 to 6 months lost; and 13 percent stated that 10 months or more would be lost. Group II showed similar percentages due to experience: 9 percent stated no months had been lost; 49 percent indicated 1 to 3 months had been lost; 27 percent stated 4 to 6 months had been lost; 7 percent indicated that 7 to 9 months were lost; and only 9 percent said that 10 months or more had been lost.

On Time School Completion

The sixth area investigated concerned the probability of the military dependent student to finish the 13-year education cycle (K-12) on time. Group I said 96 percent would be expected to finish on time, while 4 percent indicated that they would not finish on time. Group II stated that 86 percent of their children did finish on time, while 14 percent indicated that their children did not finish on time. Children who did not finish on time took longer than 13 years to finish the secondary level or did not finish it.

Economic Burden

The seventh area investigated concerned the additional amount of money a military parent expected to spend on educating his child. Group I stated the following: 23 percent would not have any additional outlay; 17 percent expected to $250 or less per child; 21 percent expected to pay between $251 and $500 per child; 20 percent expected to pay between $501 and $1000 per child; and 19 percent indicated that they expected to pay $1001 or more per child per year. Group II showed a similar trend though somewhat lower in percentages.

Forty percent did not pay any additional money on their children. The remaining percentage was split the following way: 19 percent spent $250 or less; 14 percent spent between $251 and $500; 17 percent spent between $501 and $1000; and 10 percent spent $1001 or over per child per year.

Skill Problems

The eighth area investigated concerned what elementary level skill problem(s) would develop due to the mobility of the military family. Group I had the following expectations: 14 percent stated that their children would have a mathematic problem; 13 percent indicated that their children would have a reading problem; 14 percent indicated that the children's social skills would suffer; and 31 percent stated that they expected no skill problems to develop. These percentages are presented in Table I for comparative purposes. Group II had the following experiences: 33 percent stated that their child developed a mathematical skill problem in the elementary grades due to family mobility; 21 percent stated that a reading problem developed again due to mobility; only 1 percent stated that a writing problem developed; 9 percent indicated that their children had a social skill problem in the elementary levels; and 29 percent stated that their children had no skill problems develop in the elementary level due to mobility. These percentages are summarized in Table II for comparative purposes.

TABLE I

Officer Children's Skill Problems Based On Expectations

SKILL PROBLEM	RESPONSES	%
MATH	10	14.3
READING	9	12.9
WRITING	5	7.1
SOCIAL	10	14.3
NONE	22	31.4
OTHER	14	20.0
TOTALS	70	100.00

TABLE II

NCO Children's Skill Problems Based on Experience

SKILL PROBLEM	RESPONSES	%
MATH	23	32.9
READING	15	21.4
WRITING	1	1.4
SOCIAL	6	8.6
NONE	20	28.6
OTHER	5	7.1
TOTALS	70	100.0

Summary of Section IV

The demographic makeup of Group I and Group II was similar. Both were primarily white males with a high level of education. The major difference as designed was the length of service time. Group I consisted of personnel who served less than nine years while Group II consisted of personnel who served at least 17 years.

The data generally substantiated the study's topic: military parents or parents-to-be with less than nine years service time underestimate the effects of military life and mobility on the educational environment and development of their children when compared to a group of military parents with 17 years or more service time. The foregoing statement is proved by examining the results of each of the specific hypotheses listed in the Theoretical Framework and the related question in the survey.

H_1 was generally proved. Group I's expectations underestimated the number of school transfers their children would have to make due to occupational mobility by a total of 2 when compared to Group II's experience.

H_2 was generally proved. Group I's expectations underestimated the military dependent child's completed education level when compared to the practical experience of Group II. Group I was too high by 15 percent in the middle school prediction, but was too low by approximately the same percentage in their children's ability to complete an undergraduate education while their parents were associated with the military.

H_3 was partially proved. Group I and Group II agreed that in the majority of cases, there is no discipline problem scholastically.

Group I thought more or their children would be suspended than would fail. Group II experienced the exact opposite. Group II indicated that 14 percent of the children failed one or more grades while only 3 percent were suspended. Based on experience, it appears that approximately 15 children in 100 will fail one or more times.

H_4 was provisionally proved. Group I underestimated by 10 percent the importance of both DOD and civilian schools in their children's education. The 10 percent reappears in Group I's expectations of sending their children to parochial schools for the majority of their education. Group II did not support this expectation.

H_5 was generally disproved as differences were not significant between the groups. Group I and Group II compared favorably in almost all categories. They indicated 72 percent and 73 percent respectively, that between one and six months would be lost due to transfers or illness, with the mean time loss of three months.

H_6 was generally proved. Group I's respondents expected only 4 percent of their children not to graduate within 13 years. Group II's respondents experienced 14 percent in this same area. This seems to mean that Group I's children are 3½ times as likely not to finish through the secondary level within 13 years.

H_7 was disproved. Just the opposite was proved based on experience. Group I respondents overestimated the additional financial burden due to mobility that their children's education would cost. Approximate 80 percent of Group I indicated that they would pay out additional money in varying amounts.

Only 60 percent of Group II indicated they actually paid extra money. Group I's expectations therefore, were high by 20 percent overall.

H_8 was generally proved. The topic of skill problems developing in the elementary level due to mobility was the most important area addressed by this study. Group I's parental expectations were far too optimistic. When compared with Group II's experiences, mathematical skill problems were underestimated by 17 percent; reading problems were underestimated by 8 percent; writing problems were overestimated by 6 percent; social skill problems were overestimated by 5 percent; and lastly, both groups indicated approximately the same percentage (33 percent) of no skill problems developing in any area. Approximately two of three children will have a problem with arithmetic or reading skill development problems in the elementary grade level due to mobility and the military environment.

Therefore, six of the eight hypotheses were substantiated. In only two areas did Group I fail to support the hypothesis--the number of months of lost school time and the additional financial costs. Of these two areas, Groups I and II agreed only on the school time lost. In the area of financial burden, Group I overestimated the additional funds needed per child per year.

Overall, the stated problem has been answered. Military parents with nine years or less service time do not accurately have a realistic picture of the effects on their children's education that mobility and the military environment exert upon it, when compared to parents with 17 years or more service time.

SECTION V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The following conclusions can generally be drawn from the analyzed data. First, military life is less stable than estimated with respect to the number of school transfers military children make. Second, generally a 50 percent chance exists of a military dependent child being able to complete an undergraduate dgree while one of his parents remains on active duty if he so desires. Third, there is generally no problem in the area of school discipline for military dependent children. However, though school suspensions are expected to be somewhat of a problem at least as reflected by parental expectations and national usage, failure of one or more grade levels is a more severe problem with the mobile military child. Fourth, a vast majority of military dependent children attend both DOD and civilian schools for the majority of their education. Fifth, the military child will lose approximately three months of school time due to transfers and/or illness. Sixth, the military child has an 85 percent chance of finishing a 13-year education cycle on time. Fifteen children out of 100 will take longer or not finish at all. Seventh, 60 percent of the parents will spend between $1 and $1000 per year per child in additional

money for such things as transportation or tuition or tutoring to combat mobility. Eighth, an elementary student two times out of three will have a skill problem with either arithmetic or reading due to the effects of mobility. Only one child in three will not have any serious skill development problem. These characteristics then, are indicative of the realistic educational environment that the military dependent child can expect to encounter, and the military parents will have to understand sucessfully and to some extent consider when attempting to provide for their children's education. This is a realistic and current view of military dependent children and their environment.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is to plan and initiate a military parents' briefing relative to the educational characteristics and environment of the military dependent child. A group of military parents, school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers should form a committee, which would be charged with the task of informing primarily new military parents of the educational benefits and pitfalls that are prevalent in the mobile, military environment. The various effects should be realistically presented and probable courses of action discussed so that the military parents can be prepared to see and prevent educational problems of their children, or at least get qualified assistance as a last resort. The parental education program is mandatory if parents are to provide the crucial continuity link between different schools and environments.

The second recommendation is publicize to further the level of excellence of the DOD education system--particularly USDESEA. By doing so, unaccompanied tours could be reduced which would eliminate or lessen many of the presented problems. Money would be saved that would have to be spent for parochial or private school tuition and associated costs. Possibly the number of schools overseas would be increased to overcome the excessive overcrowding that currently plagues those schools.

The third recommendation is that a detailed study needs to be conducted in the area of regional educational discrepancies that exist, particularly in prominent military forts and bases. An attempt is needed to standardize a model that these differing areas could utilize when faced with large numbers of mobile military dependent children. This is necessary so that military students are no longer penalized scholastically or educationally for being migrant-type persons.

The fourth recommendation is that more specific research should be conducted in the area of educational expectations. An expanded examination should be conducted at each grade level to determine the primary discrepancies between expectations and experiences, not only of the parents, but of all involved personnel. The effects of occupational mobility in the military should be more closely examined as this area has benefits for both the mobile military parents and mobile civilian parents. Presently, the field of psychology is responsible for the majority of the knowledge in the area of expectations. Educators must also examine this area to prepare themselves by being more knowledgeable when dealing with the military

community and other types of peripatetic occupations. Educators must serve all facets of the community. Ignorance of the area is no excuse. Equal opportunities must be offered to all members of the community whatever their backgrounds.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

[1]J.V. Firth, "Occupational Mobility, Turbulence, and Children's Attainment," The Royal Air Force Quarterly, Summer 1974, p. 157.

[2]W. Morris, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Boston: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc. and Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), no page number.

[3]G. Sax, Empirical Foundations of Educational Research (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 144.

[4]V.R. Gonzales, Psychiatry and the Army Brat (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1970), p. 6,

[5]J.A. Kenny, "The Child in the Military Community," Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, Spring 1967, p. 55.

[6]A.D. Olsen, "Schoolmaster in Europe, " U.S. Army, January 1972, p. 38.

[7]J.V. Firth, "The Education of Servicemen's Children: Combating Turbulence," The Royal Air Force Quarterly, Winter 1974, p. 327.

[8]Gonzales, p. 39.

[9]A. Cardinale, "Getting into American Colleges: Difficulties Face Graduates of Overseas Dependents Schools," College Board Review, Spring 1971, p. 20.

[10]Kenny, p. 52.

[11]Firth, Summer 1974, p. 159.

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APPENDIX A

DEPENDENT EDUCATION SURVEY

Directions: Check only one response to each of the following questions.

1. What is your rank?
   1. ____Officer
   2. ____Non-commissioned Officer
   3. ____Enlisted Person

2. What is your sex?
   1. ____Male
   2. ____Female

3. What is your ethnic origin?
   1. ____American Anglo-Non-Hispanic
   2. ____American Indian or Alaska Native
   3. ____American Black--Non-Hispanic
   4. ____American Asian/Pacific
   5. ____American Hispanic

4. How long have you been on active U.S. military duty?
   1. ____1 year or less
   2. ____2 to 5 years
   3. ____6 to 9 years
   4. ____10 to 13 years
   5. ____14 to 17 years
   6. _____18 to 21 years
   7. _____22 to 25 years
   8. _____26 to 29 years
   9. _____30 years or more

5. What education level have you completed?
   1. ____Grade school
   2. ____Middle school (7th-9th)
   3. ____High school
   4. ____High school - GED
   5. ____Some college
   6. _____Associate degree (usually 2 years)
   7. _____Undergraduate degree
   8. _____Graduate degree
   9. _____Beyond graduate degree

6. During a 20-year military career, how many times do you estimate your child (children) will have to transfer to a different school?
   1. _____0 times
   2. _____1 or 2 times
   3. _____3 or 4 times
   4. _____5 or 6 times
   5. _____7 or 8 times
   6. _____9 or 10 times
   7. _____10 or 12 times
   8. _____13 or more times

7. In a 20-25 year military career, what educational level will your child (children) successfully complete?
   1. _____Elementary level (1 to 6 grades)
   2. _____Middle level (7 to 9 grades)
   3. _____Secondary level (10 to 12 grades)
   4. _____Undergraduate level (13 to 16 grades)
   5. _____Graduate level or beyond
   6. _____Vocational/technical
   7. _____Other (please specify) _____.

8. Due to personal turbulence in moving during a 20-year military career, will your child (children) be disciplined by school authorities?
   1. _____Be suspended one or more times
   2. _____Be expelled
   3. _____Fail one or more grade levels
   4. _____Both 1 and 3
   5. _____Both 2 and 3
   6. _____No disciplinary problems

* If you have been on active duty for 20-years or more, give your actual experiences for each of the starred questions.

9. In the course of an overseas accompanied tour, will you be willing to have your child (children) board and attend middle or secondary school at least 100 miles from your home if that was the closest U.S. school?
1. _____Yes
2. _____No

10. What type of educational institution will your child attend for the majority of his education (at least through the 12th grade):
1. _____All civilian schools
2. _____Both civilian and DOD sponsored schools (DOD = Department of Defense)
3. _____Private schools
4. _____Military schools
5. _____Parochial schools
6. _____Foreign schools

11. In a normal 13-year education cycle (K-12), will your child's school absences (due to transfers, leaves, sickness, etc.) total:
1. _____0 months
2. _____1 to 3 months
3. _____4 to 6 months
4. _____7 to 9 months
5. _____10 to 12 months
6. _____13 months or more

12. Will your child finish his normal 13-year education cycle (K-12) on time, that is, within 13 years from the time he starts?
1. _____Yes
2. _____No

13. In a normal 13-year public education cycle, what amount of money will you have to spend over and beyond what you might have spent if you had not been in the Army? (Consider transportation costs, tuition, tutors, meals, etc.)
1. _____Not exceed what I normally would have spent as a civilian.
2. _____$250 or less per child
3. _____$251 - $500 per child
4. _____$501 - $1000 per child
5. _____$1001 or more per child

14. Due to excessive mobility of military families, which area suffers most in elementary levels for your child?
1. _____Mathematic skills
2. _____Reading skills
3. _____Writing skills
4. _____Social skills
5. _____No problems in any skill areas
6. _____Other (please specify)_____

15. During the course of school transfers will your child's (children's) school transcripts become lost or destroyed?
1. _____Yes
2. _____No

* If you have been on active duty for 20-years or more, give your actual experiences for each of the starred questions.

COMMENTS: Please add any additional comments about the educational experiences that might have occurred to your child or about the survey itself.

APPENDIX B

DISPOSITION FORM

For use of this form, see AR 340-15, the proponent agency is TAGCEN.

52

REFERENCE OR OFFICE SYMBOL	SUBJECT
ATSS-DOE	Dependent Education Survey

TO | FROM DOE | DATE 28 Oct 77 | CMT 1

1. Attached is a survey related to dependent education which will become an important part of a study addressing the same topic. A copy of the study being prepared by an outside agency will be provided to the LRC for your review when completed.

2. The survey is voluntary even though I encourage you to take the few minutes required to complete it. If your wife is in the area, she can complete it for you. Answer each question based upon your personal experience. Questions six and seven relate to your oldest child only. There is no need to include your name.

3. Place all questionnaires, completed or noncompleted, in the DOE box in the SDC by 5 November.

1 Incl
as

JOHN R. CARY, Jr.
MAJ, FA
D, DOE

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58

DA FORM 1 FEB 57 2496 REPLACES DD FORM 96, WHICH IS OBSOLETE. ☆ U.S. G.P.O. 1976-665697/1018